

Poetry.

A FATHER'S PITY.

(Psalm ciii. 13.)

You may talk of the strength of friendship's ties;
Of a love so perfect that naught can mar.
You may boast of devotion that never dies,
But a father's pity is stronger far.

He sees his child in the morn of life,
A tender plant that needs his care;
An innocent spirit exposed to strife,
A life that with others must do and dare.

He sees that life on the shores of time,
Where tides roll in and the breakers roar,
Where the lives of men are dark with crime,
And earth with hell's foulness is running o'er.

He sees sweet innocence sore amazed
At the sins which drive the soul from God;
He sees the trembling spirit dazed
By passion's war and the chastening rod.

And up in his heart there wells a tide
Of pity as deep as the ocean's flow;
His daughter or son he has descried,
Where the threatening breakers come and go.

"O God," he cries, "my child sustain,
While the elements war his soul around;
Keep him from guilt and woe and pain,
And may he in all good works abound!"

And time rolls on—probation's years—
The child attains mature estate;
But still the father's heart appears
Surcharged with pity just as great.

Through life he carries the burdensome load,
And with it is planted beneath the sod;
He rises immortal to heaven's abode,
Where his pity dissolves in the pity of God.

—James H. Potts, D. D.

Contributions.

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY.

An Address Delivered Before the Brethren Convention, Held in Johnstown, October 8, 9, 10, 1895.

"So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say to the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."
—Ezek. 33: 7, 8, 9.

The Gospel ministry is a fruit of Christ's mediation a consequent and a proof of his exaltation. The design of it, as an institution, is the most important of which we can conceive. It is the advancement of the divine glory in the salvation of rebellious sinners. The minister of Jesus is sent to attest the Gospel of the grace of God—to show to all lapsed people the way of salvation—to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive for-

givenness of sins, and an inheritance among those who are sanctified. His object and his work is nothing less than, instrumentally, to rescue guilty and depraved, yet immortal beings, from the lowest hell, and conduct them to the highest heaven.

But his responsibility is as weighty as the end of his function is exalted. A most awful trust is committed to him by the Lord Jesus Christ. He is appointed to watch for souls as one who must give account. And that he should be pure from the blood of all men—that he should not be chargeable with the destruction of those of his hearers who may finally perish, is of vast moment to myself. How can his own soul be saved if he prove recreant to the trust committed to him? Having preached to others he himself might be a castaway. If, neglectful of his duties, he fail to warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come, and leave them to sink into endless perdition, will not their blood be upon him? "O son of man," says the Lord God Almighty, "I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." Here it is declared that while the watchman who faithfully executes his trust rescues his soul, whatever may be the issue with respect to those who are favored with his warnings, the unfaithful watchman is chargeable with the everlasting death of such as perish from under his ministrations. His life will be for their life. And this will be so not only in the case of the minister, whose doctrine is mixed with unhallowed leaven, which proves to those who foolishly partake, eternal bitterness, but also respecting him who adopts the policy by which so many pulpits have been disgraced, deferring the declaration of the whole truth of God to a so-called convenient season, and likewise to him who, impelled by an unquenchable desire.

"To mount to place and power of worldly sort," neglects the appropriate duties of his office, and, for the sake of popularity, makes merchandise of immortal souls. How little will their notoriety and titles and luxuries avail when God shall come to reckon with them for blood. Hear again the word of the Lord: "Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed them-

selves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Wherefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord; thus saith the Lord God: Behold I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them." It is not merely the loss of their temporal advantages and gratifications that unfaithful ministers shall experience. Much more than this is contained in the woe that is here pronounced. Its full import will not be known until that day when, with blanched faces and trembling forms, they shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ, awaiting, in dreadful suspense, the tremendous sentence. Great God, deliver us from such a consummation of misery! It was Pollock who said:

"Among the accursed, who sought a hiding place
In vain from fierceness of Jehovah's rage,
And from the hot displeasure of the Lamb,
Most wretched, most contemptible, most vile,
Stood the false priest, and in his conscience felt
The fellest gnaw of the undying worm.
And so he might; for he had on his hands
The blood of souls, that would not wipe away.
***** What cursing then
Was heaped upon his head by ruined souls,
That charged him with their murder, as he stood
With eye of all the unredeemed, most sad,
Waiting the coming of the Son of man!"

But how may he, who is intrusted with the care of souls, escape this shame—this unutterable woe? How may he be pure from the blood of those to whom he ministers. It is only by the faithful execution of his trust. It is only by not concealing from his people any part of the truth. In his really pathetic valedictory to the bishops of Ephesus this was the ground on which the great Agostle appealed on the score of his innocence, and rolled over the blame, if blame there was, on those who had enjoyed his ministry, "Therefore I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." The Gospel which reveals to us the way of salvation that God has devised, is his counsel. In its most comprehensive sense, it embraces important truths that are to be believed, gracious privileges that are to be enjoyed, and practical duties which are to be performed. It exhibits a system of religion that is doctrinal, experimental, and practical. He, therefore, who would secure the approbation of his Divine Master, and, what is next to this in importance, the approval of his own conscience, must declare this counsel of God in all its parts, publicly and privately; in the pulpit and in the parlor; in the house